

The Bluestone Trail

A Vision for Connectivity and
Recreation



Presentation to City Council
December 13, 2011



Background

- Council directed staff to develop plans for “shovel ready” trail project on February 9, 2010
- Staff began planning work for “Bluestone Trail” with its northern terminus at Port Republic Road and its southern terminus at Greendale Road.
- Original trail alignment originally had topography challenges and concern from Parks & Recreation Department
- Parks & Recreation/Public Works Departments worked with Rich Edwards to develop an alignment that would work for all stakeholders
- Final alignment approximately 2 miles in length; follows approximate trace of “Blacks Run Greenway”
- Construction Phase I planned between Port Republic Road and Stone Spring Road



Harrisonburg as bicycle and pedestrian friendly community

- Awarded bronze level Bicycle Friendly Community from League of American Bicyclists
- Awarded bronze level Ride Center from International Mountain Bicycling Association
- Great natural singletrack trail opportunities and steadily improving network of bike lanes and sidewalks has created great opportunities for walking and cycling within the City.



What are we missing?

Dedicated non-motorized pathways

- Provide a off street obstacle free route for transportation and recreation.
- Ideal for walkers, runners, cyclists, commuters, and children
- Ideal for teaching children how to ride.
- Suitable for bicycle trailers and strollers



obacco Trail, Chuck Flink



Hawksbill Greenway in Luray, VA



Roanoke River Greenway, VA



Passes through

- Wasena Park (City)
- Roanoke Valley Skate Park (City)
- Smith Park (City)
- Piedmont Park (City)
- Green Hill Park (County)



Charlottesville, VA



**Rivanna Trail
(2.3 mi.)**



**Forest Hills Park
(1.5-mi)**

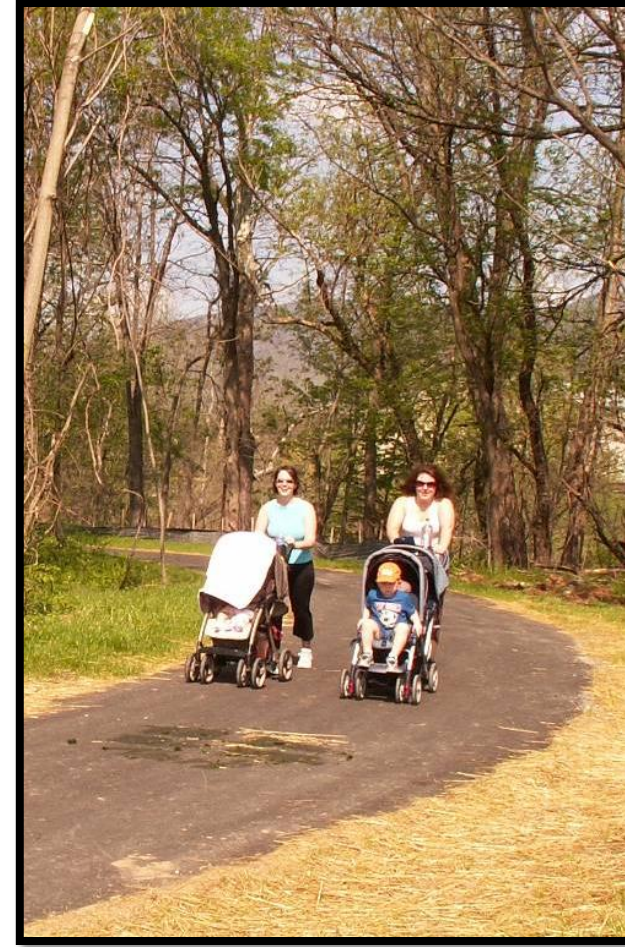


**Schenk's Greenway
(0.25-mi.)**



Other Virginia Communities

- Lynchburg
- Danville
- Fairfax
- Richmond
- Radford
- Alexandria
- Vinton
- Stevens City
- Galax
- Damascus
- Salem
- Roanoke



Benefits of Multi-Use Trails

- Family-Friendly Health and Recreation
- Greater Connectivity to neighborhoods, parks, & other destinations

Greenways...

- Economic Opportunities
- Cultural and Educational Amenities
- Preservation of Natural Resources



Social Benefits

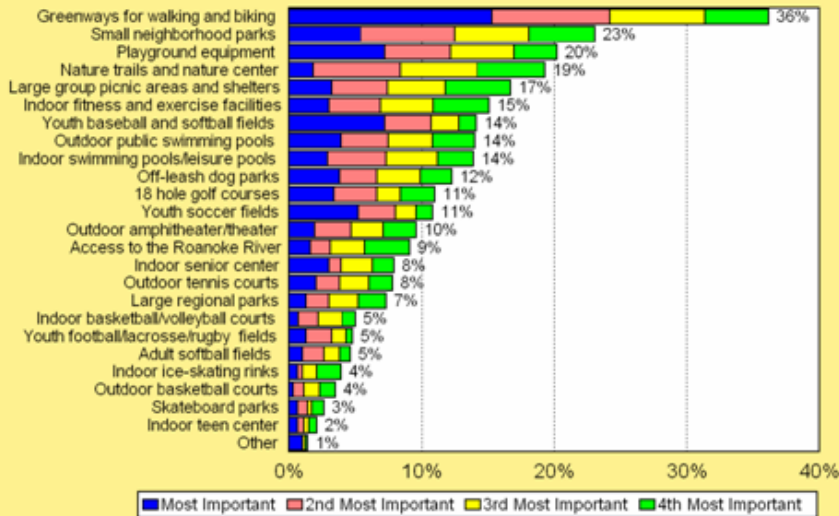
- Trails are the most requested outdoor amenity. *Virginia Outdoor Plan*
- 30% of US adults 20 years of age and older are obese. *National Center for Health Statistics*
- Just 3 hours of bicycling a week reduces a persons risk of heart disease & stroke by as much as 50%. *League of American Bicyclists*
- 79 million Americans feel that trails, greenways, bike routes, are very important in choosing where to live... *Bureau of Transportation Statistics*
- "...high-quality environment is essential for children to achieve optimal health and development.." *Center for Disease Control*



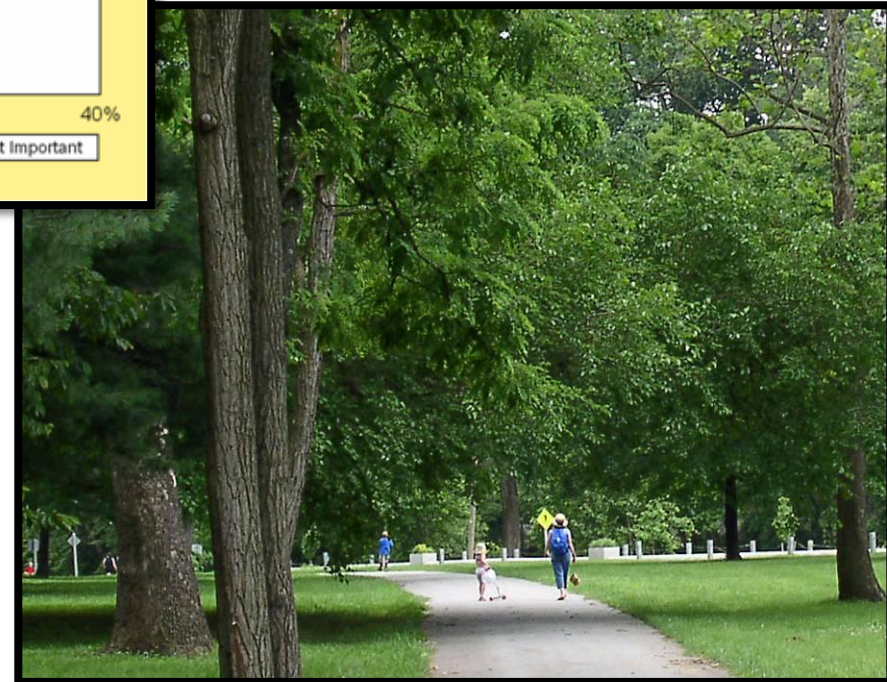
Social Benefits

Q12. Parks and Recreation Facilities That Are Most Important to Respondent Households

by percentage of respondents (multiple choices could be made)



Source: Leisure Vision/ETC Institute (May 2006)



Economic Benefits: Increased Value of Adjacent Land



National Association of Realtors
rank trails as the 2nd most
important community amenity
out of a list of 18 choices.



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Parade Of Homes

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- Best Kitchen
- Best Overall in Price Category

\$349,950 & Up

Roanoke County's Newest Community Open Sundays 1 to 4 PM.
Lots Available for Custom Building.
Builder Will Trade • Homes Now Available to Tour

• Blue Ridge Parkway nearby
• Greenway Walking Trail
• 2, 3, & 4 car garages
• Zoned for...
• 2300 to 3200+ sq. ft.

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(540) 772-9234
N.M. 969-0532

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Selling
Custom Building
Investment Property
Call Me Today
Tom Palmer
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540-871-3727

LONG & FOSTER
EST. 1912



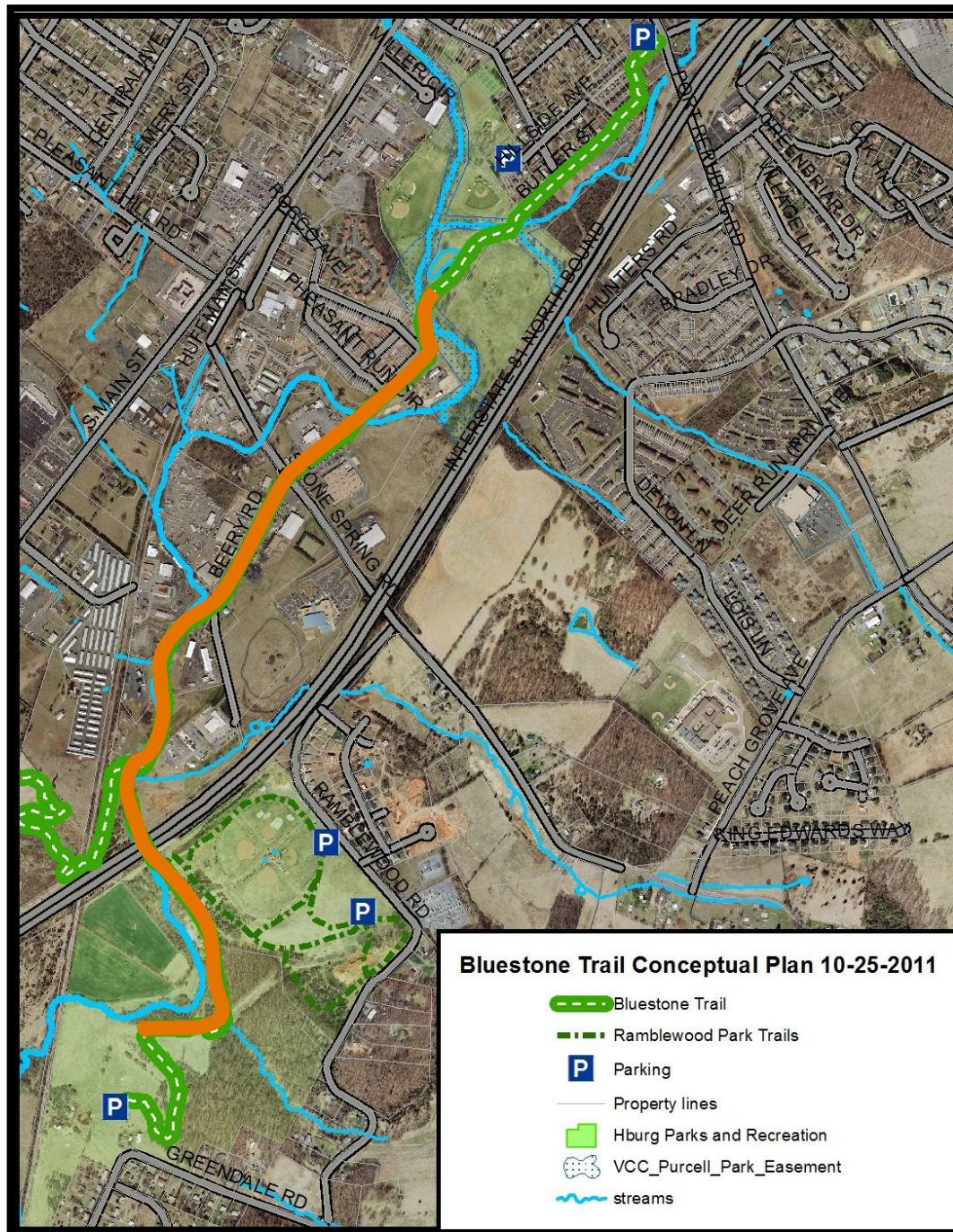
- 1.6 million local visits accounted for about \$5.3 million of spending directly related to Virginia's W&OD trail.
- “townhomes in Kansas City sell for 30-40% higher along the Katy Trail than for the same style townhomes merely blocks away without trail proximity...”



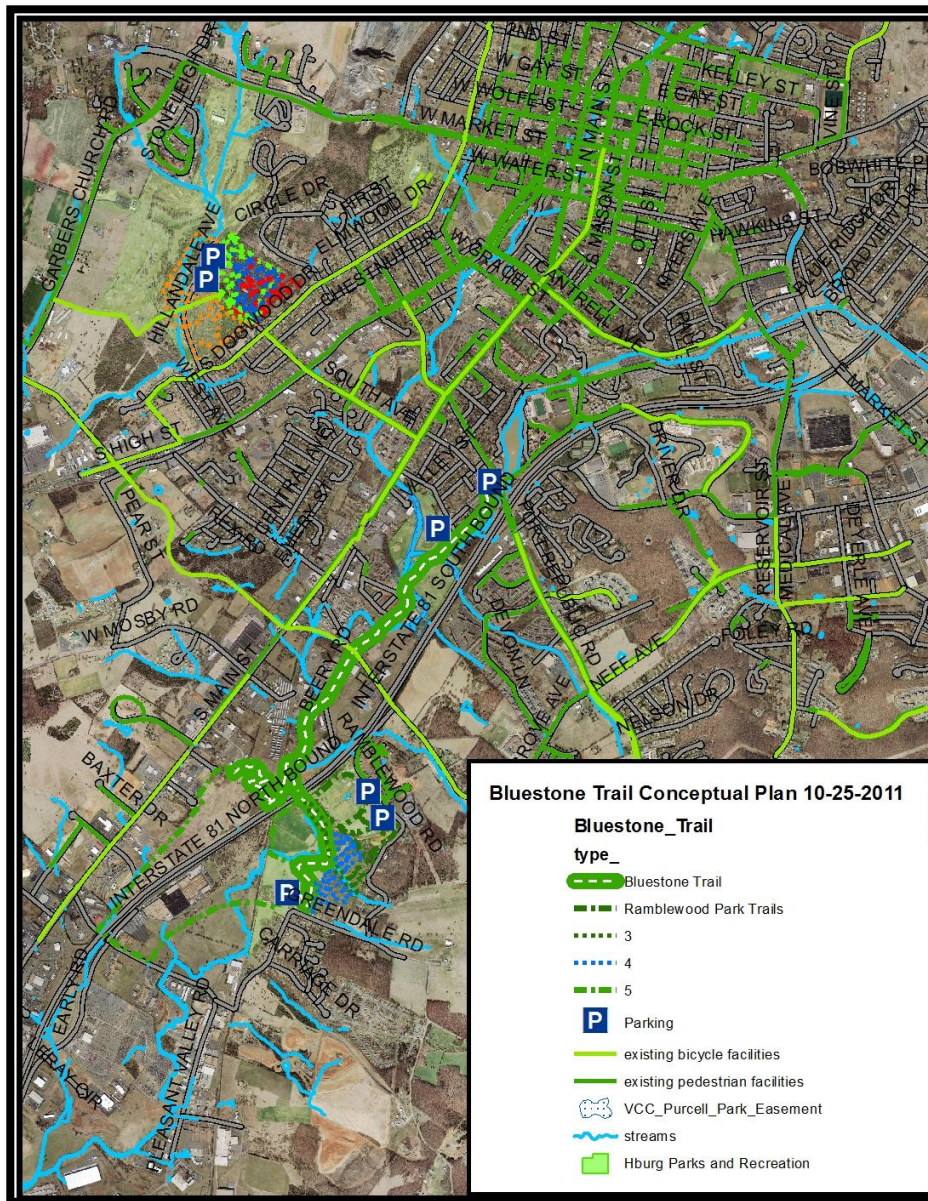
Planning Process

- Consultant and City staff met to review project objectives.
 - Potential corridors reviewed for opportunities and constraints.
 - Communicated with all property owners and received verbal approval.
 - City engineering staff reviewed first portion of corridor.
-
- *Receive concept approval from stakeholder groups and City Council.*
 - City engineering team develops plans for each portion of project.
 - Rough cost estimates developed.
 - Meet with property owners to discuss plans and property agreements.
 - Obtain written agreements on property acquisition or access.
 - Refine plan sets and develop detailed cost estimates.





Connectivity Map



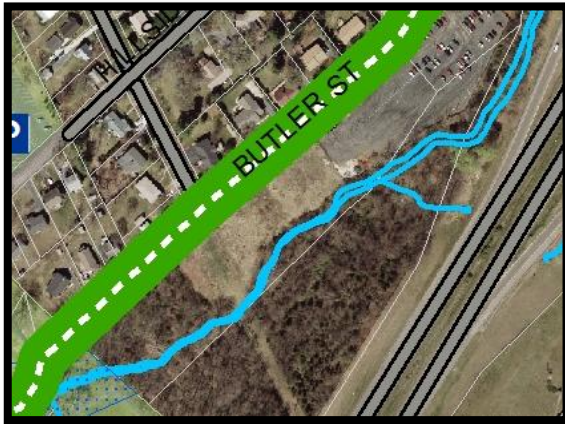
- Connects Ramblewood and Purcell Parks to over half of Harrisonburg via existing bike & pedestrian facilities.
- Over 500 households are located within 4 blocks of the trail route.
- Links Hillandale singletrack trails with future Ramblewood singletrack trails to create a 15+ mile (3 hour) mtb ride within Harrisonburg.
- Provides critical links for underserved neighborhoods; Purcell, Glendale, South Main



Port Republic to Butler St



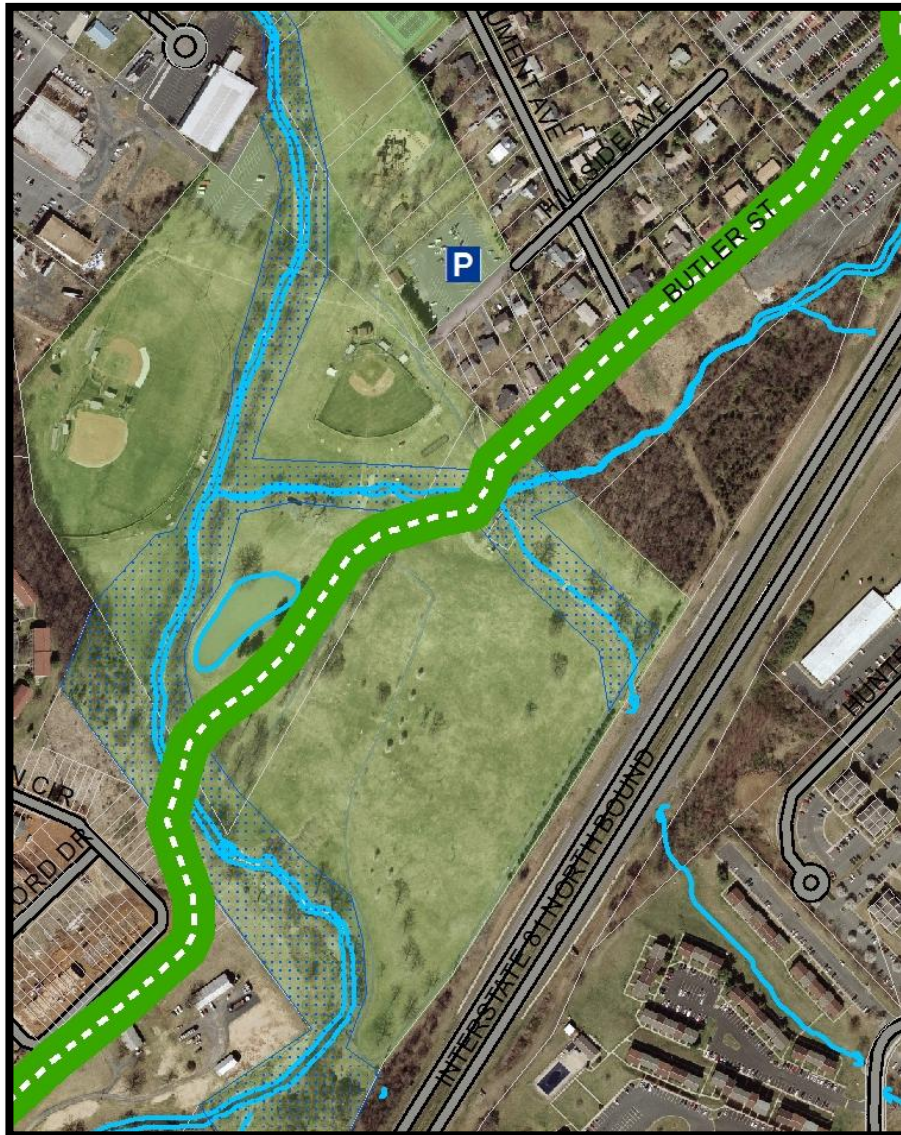
Butler St



On street route delineated by markings.



Purcell Park



- Three routes assessed.
- Need to differentiate between existing trails and Bluestone Trail.
- VCC easement considerations.
- Blacks Run bridge.



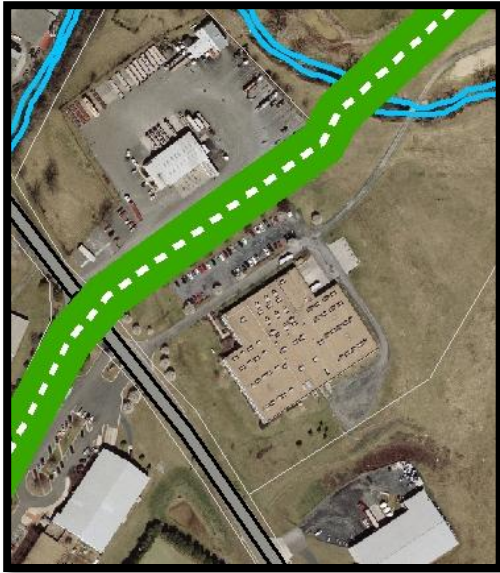
Pheasant Run



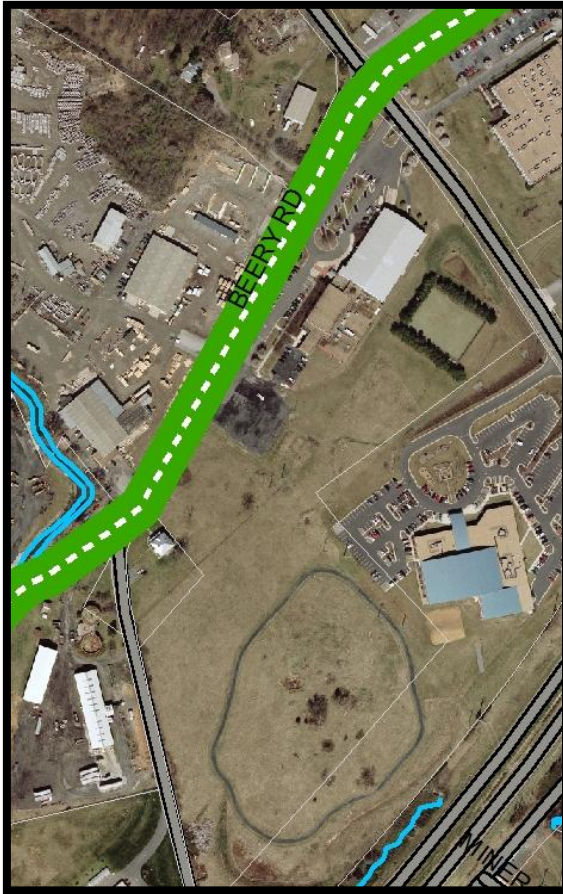
- Connectivity for residents.
- Bridge over Blacks Run.
- Provides more efficient route.
- Avoids unwilling property owner east of Blacks Run.
- Between existing fence line and parking lot.
- Property owners have requested lighting.



George's



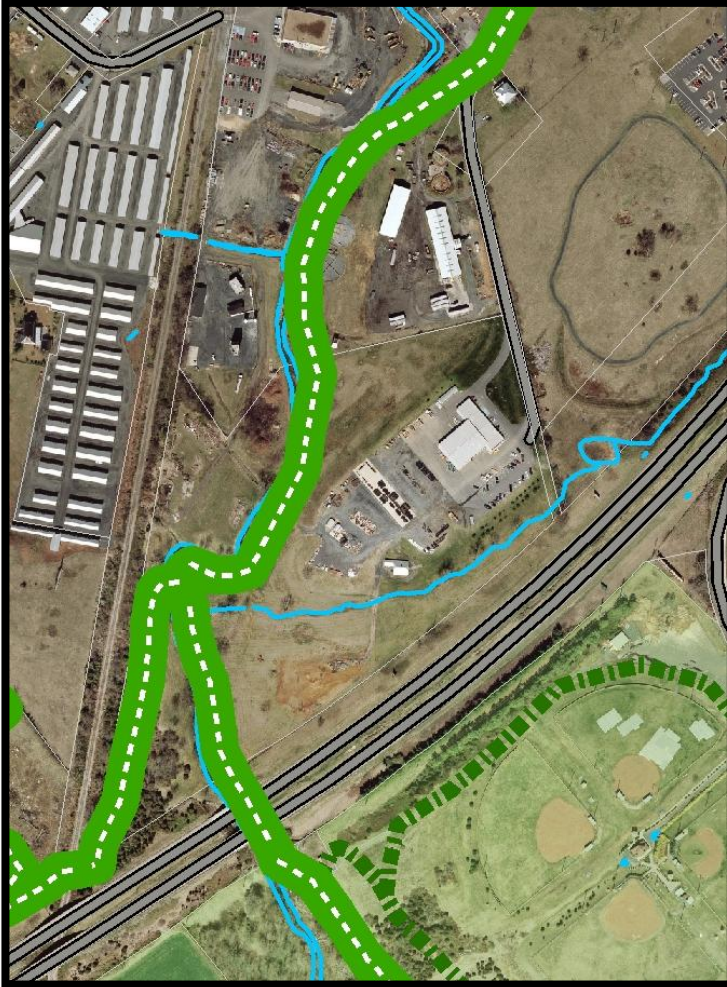
Beery Rd / Wellness Center



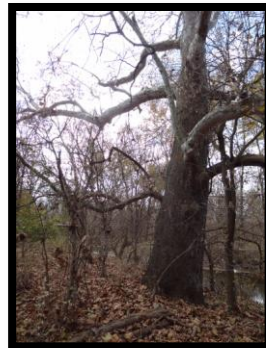
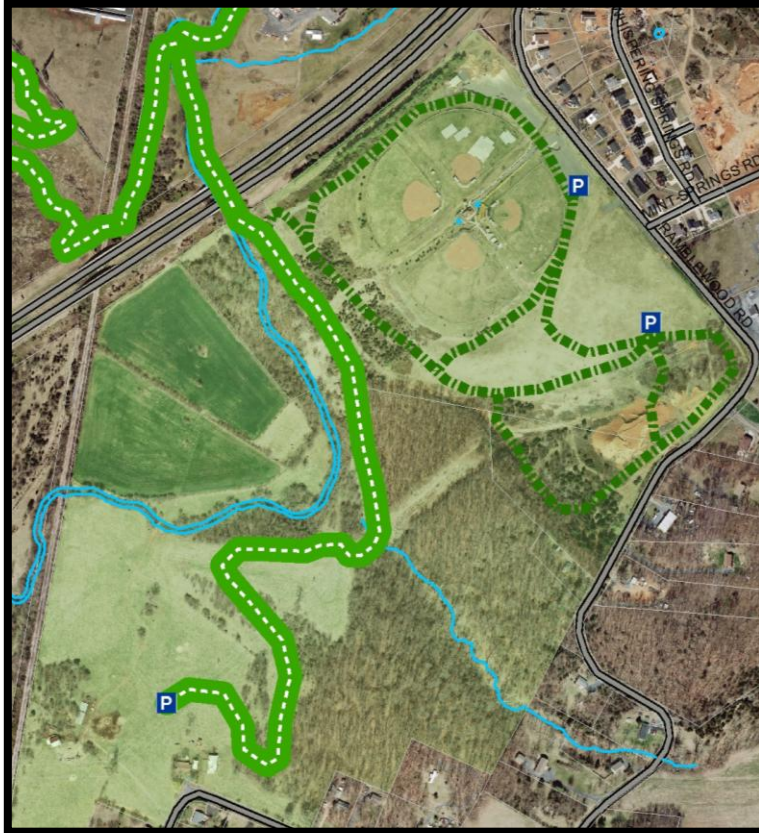
Off street 10' wide path.



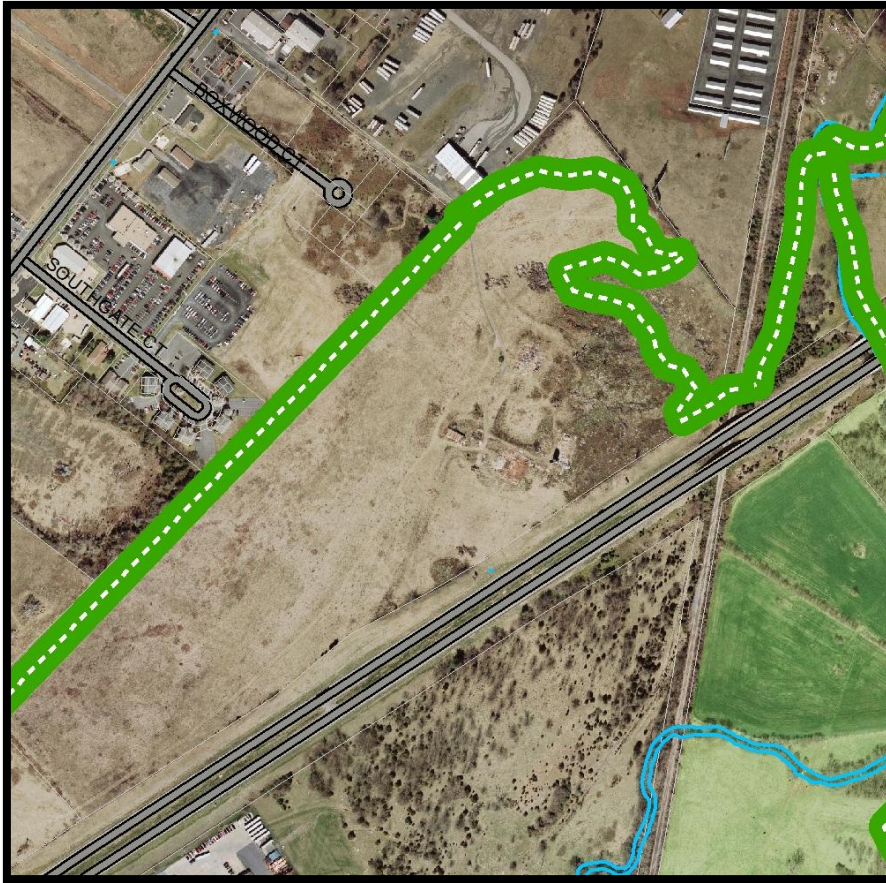
DPW Property



Ramblewood



Southbury Extension (Phase 2)



- Access via DPW property.
- Requires bridge over Blacks Run.
- Requires Norfolk Southern agreement.
- Southbury willing property owner.
- Greatly improves bike and pedestrian access to South Main St.



Pleasant Valley Rd Extension



- Not part of current planning efforts.
- Ideally bundled with planning and development of Pleasant Valley Rd Connector.



The Vision



- Connect Purcell and Ramblewood Parks
- Create model shared-use pathway for future trail projects.
- Develop a trail that is instantly popular and heavily used to showcase demand and community support for future trail projects.



Realities

- Challenges

- Two bridge crossings over Blacks Run near Purcell Park
 - Will require coordination with FEMA and DCR
- Conservation Easement in Purcell Park will require coordination with VCC for compliance during construction phase

- Right of Way

- Five property owners in Phase I
 - James Madison University
 - City of Harrisonburg
 - Pheasant Run Townhomes
 - George's Foods, Inc.
 - RMH Wellness Center



Next Steps

- Funding
 - Recreational Access Grant for a Portion of Phase I
 - Remaining federal funding on Port Republic Road, Phase III
- Engineering
 - Complete preliminary engineering work by summer 2012

